

I PLEDGE[®]...

Frequently Asked Questions From The Field

As you organize iPledge[®] events and raise awareness to domestic violence, you're sure to receive questions from your community. Fielding questions on the spot at a community health fair or neighborhood event can be challenging. Below are a few frequently asked questions and answers to help you prepare.

Q. What is the iPledge Campaign?

A. The iPledge Campaign is a social awareness initiative that engages the community in taking a stand against domestic violence. Created in 2008 by Women Against Abuse, the purpose of iPledge is to inform the public about the ways in which they can have a meaningful impact in shaping attitudes about domestic violence and ultimately preventing abuse. iPledge recognizes the importance of bystander intervention as key to overall violence prevention. Participants are asked to sign a pledge against violence at www.iPledgeWAA.org.

Q. I'm being abused. What should I do?

A. Thank you for sharing this information; it can sometimes be difficult to talk about abusive situations. I am not a trained domestic violence counselor, so I would encourage you to call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 (TTY: 1-800-787-3224) [or the Philadelphia Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-866-723-3014, if you are located in Philadelphia]. The hotline offers trained counselors 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, and all calls are free and confidential. If you call, nobody is going to pressure you to make decisions you do not want to make. The counselors can provide you with information, referrals, and safety planning.

www.iPledgeWAA.org

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Q. I know someone who is being abused. What should I do?

A. It is hard to see a loved one being mistreated. Abusive relationships can feel isolating, so it's important that your friend/family member knows you are there to support them. You can tell them that "no one deserves to be abused" and encourage them to call the National or Philadelphia Domestic Violence Hotline. We have trained counselors that can provide support and information. You are also more than welcome to call if you'd like to discuss your friend's situation with a trained and knowledgeable counselor. Remember that our first impulse may be to tell that person what to do, like "leave now", but it is better to listen and support them even if we disagree with some of their decisions.

Q. Why don't victims just leave the abusive relationship?

A. Leaving an abusive relationship is very difficult, especially when the survivor is financially dependent on the abusive partner or has children with him/her. As part of the abuse, the survivor is usually isolated from their support system; over time the abuser has pushed friends and family members away, so the survivor can feel alone and ill equipped to take action. Also, leaving can be extremely dangerous. Abuse is all about exerting control over the other person, so if the survivor challenges that control by attempting to leave, the abusive partner is more likely to become violent. If a survivor is choosing to leave an abusive relationship, it is important for them to talk to a counselor on the Philadelphia Domestic Violence Hotline to develop a safety plan.

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Q. I'd like to stay in touch with you. Can we exchange phone numbers?

A. I've really appreciated talking with you today; however, I am not a trained counselor and cannot share my personal information. If you would like to continue talking with someone, you can call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at any time at 1-800-799-7233 / Philadelphia Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-866-723-3014. . The hotline offers trained counselors 24/7, and all calls are confidential.

Addendum for Philadelphia audiences

Q. What does Women Against Abuse do?

A. Women Against Abuse is the largest domestic violence service provider and advocate in Philadelphia, PA. We serve more than 15,000 people through comprehensive services that include emergency and transitional housing, hotline counseling, legal aid, behavioral health therapy, and community education and advocacy. Our mission is two-pronged: to provide quality, compassionate, and nonjudgmental services in a manner that fosters self-respect and independence in persons experiencing intimate partner violence AND to lead the struggle to end domestic violence through advocacy and community education.

Q. I tried calling the hotline before, but they said the shelter was full.

A. I'm sorry the safe havens were full. We do our best to accommodate those in need, but have a limited capacity of 200 beds. I would encourage you to try calling again, as availability changes on a nearly daily basis. The hotline counselors can also work with you to consider alternate options and create a safety plan with you.

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Q. How can I volunteer for Women Against Abuse?

A. Women Against Abuse has several ways to support its work. Visit its website, www.womenagainstabuse.org for a whole spectrum of opportunities to get engaged under “Take Action.”

Q. How can I donate items to Women Against Abuse?

A. Women Against Abuse accepts new, unused household items, clothing, books, and toiletries. We keep an updated “wish list” of most needed items on our website, www.womenagainstabuse.org. We also hold a holiday gift drive in November and December. You can learn more by visiting Women Against Abuse’s website.

Q. How can I make a monetary donation to Women Against Abuse?

A. Thank you for your interest in supporting Women Against Abuse! You can make a donation on the website, www.womenagainstabuse.org, or by sending a check made payable to Women Against Abuse.

Q. Can you talk to my workplace/church/neighborhood group/school, etc.?

A. Women Against Abuse appreciates the opportunity to bring awareness to domestic violence. We receive hundreds of requests to attend community events, so we would ask you to fill out the Event Form on our website, www.womenagainstabuse.org. A staff member will follow-up with you once they receive this information with the details of your event.

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Q. I want a PFA (Protection From Abuse Order)/My partner violated my PFA/I'm trying to get custody of my kids, and other legal questions.

A. The Women Against Abuse Legal Center has attorneys and court advocates that can help you with a range of legal needs relating to domestic violence. You can contact them at 215-686-7082. They are open M-F from 9 to 5, so if you call after hours, you can leave a message and they will get back to you the next business day. ***Never give a person legal advice, since legal protections are not always a safe or appropriate option for every situation.*

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